

Biscayne Bay Regional Restoration Coordination Team

2001 ANNUAL REPORT - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Recommendations:

During the upcoming year, it is recommended that the Biscayne Bay Regional Restoration Coordination Team ("BBRRCT" or "Coordination Team") focus its efforts on the goals and objectives as outlined in the Coordination Team charter and the Biscayne Bay Partnership Initiative (BBPI). These and other issues pertinent to Biscayne Bay ecosystem restoration, enhancement, and preservation must be developed and addressed. Specific items that will be addressed during 2002 include:

1. further development and implementation of the Coordination Team charter goals;
2. development of detailed short- and long-term activities, and creation of independent teams to work toward accomplishing these activities; culminating in a Biscayne Bay Action Plan;
3. review and comment on the progress of Year 2001 projects;
4. development of formal selection and evaluation procedures to be used for the project ranking lists for fiscal years 2002 and 2003;
5. identifying additional funding sources not yet identified.

For future projects, a process should be developed to ensure the parties receiving funds provide a guarantee that the majority of funds will be expended in the year following award of the contract.

Conclusions:

One of the Coordination Team's charter objectives, *"Identify Funding Requirements"*, has been accomplished for this year (**Table 2**). There are other goals and objectives that are yet to be set. The Coordination Team will continue to meet on a regular basis throughout the upcoming year to ensure these goals and objectives, along with those of the BBPI, are fully met, to ensure that Biscayne Bay remains a treasured ecosystem for all.

In year one, 12 projects were funded with \$6 million in appropriations. This included \$3.5 million of land acquisition.

In year two, 15 projects were ranked, totaling approximately \$14.2 million. This includes up to \$8 million for land acquisition.

Biscayne Bay Regional Restoration Coordination Team

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I. Introduction:

The purpose of this report is to summarize the Biscayne Bay Regional Restoration Coordination Team's ("BBRRCT" or "Coordination Team") progress to date, which includes the period from the team's inception on September 24, 2001, to the date of issuance of this report on January 15, 2002.

The next section of this report provides a background discussion of Biscayne Bay, the Coordination Team, and directives for the team.

The third section details the progress of the Biscayne Bay projects during year 2001.

The final sections provide the list of ranked projects for 2002 the team's recommendations and conclusions, and future direction.

II. Background

A. Hydrologic History of Biscayne Bay

The Biscayne Bay watershed is contiguous to the Florida Everglades, and receives water from the Everglades that flows directly into the bay. Drainage projects, beginning in the first half of the twentieth century, converted more than 50 percent of the Everglades to agricultural and urban uses. Agricultural practices and the urbanization of the area have contributed to alteration of lands in the watershed. In addition, the population of this area is expected to increase by over one million people in the next 20 years, which will exacerbate the impacts to the watershed and the resulting threat to the vitality of the bay.

Biscayne Bay consists of three sections: north, central, and south. North Bay extends from Dumfoundling Bay south to the Rickenbacker Causeway. Two new inlets created after 1926 through south and north Miami Beach altered circulation in northern Biscayne Bay. The mangrove margins north of Coconut Grove and Key Biscayne were largely covered by fill, and bulkheads were constructed in order to develop the shoreline. Dredging of the bay margin for this fill left 10-20 foot deep troughs in much of northern Biscayne Bay. New dredged islands, port facilities, and six cross-bay causeways further segmented northern Biscayne Bay. Construction of infrastructure items such as causeways and sewage treatment plants, which empty into the Bay, have resulted in approximately 40% of the north Bay to be too deep or turbid for benthic communities. Nevertheless, some parts of this bay area remain highly productive.

Central Biscayne Bay extends from the Rickenbacker Causeway south to Black Point, and is bordered mainly by Coral Gables and Coconut Grove on the west and Key Biscayne on the east. Much of this part of the bay is included as part of Biscayne National Park. It is the most well mixed area, achieving direct ocean exchange.

South Biscayne Bay is usually subdivided into two parts. The south bay section extends from Black Point to Mangrove Point, and encompasses the lower portion of Biscayne National Park. It is bordered by an intact mangrove shoreline that forms a narrow band along much of its coast. The extreme south bay stretches from Mangrove Point to Jewfish Creek, and includes Card Sound and Barnes Sound. Much of the southern bay, despite substantial development in the watershed, has relatively pristine habitats, good water quality and supports significant production of fish and shellfish. Changes in freshwater input, however, have altered its

estuarine character. In addition, vessel traffic, along with canals, rivers, and other factors has contributed to turbidity levels and is causing increasing damage to the benthic communities.

B. Coordination Team

In 1999, the Florida Legislature created the BBPI. Its mission was to develop of an open and inclusive, community-based forum to survey public and private sector activities and programs that affect Biscayne Bay, and to provide recommendations for actions to protect, improve, and enhance the bay's resources, its social, economic, and natural values, with its ecological health as a priority. In January 2001, the BBPI issued a final report that recommended the establishment of a Biscayne Bay Regional Restoration Coordination Team as part of the Working Group of the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force. The report suggested that the Coordination Team recognize the importance of watershed management for the protection of Biscayne Bay, and it also outlined functions for the Coordination Team.

The Working Group approved the Coordination Team's charter on September 24, 2001. Twenty-three entities were identified as members of the Coordination Team, including both governmental and non-governmental entities. Using the final report of the BBPI as a guide, the Coordination Team will integrate and coordinate restoration, enhancement, and preservation projects, plans, and activities, and will work toward maintaining a functioning ecosystem while promoting a sustainable region. Specifically, the purpose of the team, as outlined in the charter, is to:

1. provide a forum for public involvement, outreach, and interagency coordination and communication;
2. identify priority issues for action and to create teams to address those issues as needed;
3. make recommendations on key issues to the Working Group;
4. identify goals and performance measures related to key issues and to assess the achievement of goals;
5. identify funding requirements; and
6. review elements of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan that affect Biscayne Bay.

Four weeks after approval of the charter, the BBRRCT held its first team meeting. During this and the next five team meetings, the team began the process of formulating its goals and objectives, sought agreement on consensus building and decision making procedures, researched the legislature's expectations of the BBRRCT, prepared short- and long-term lists of team activities, heard project presentations from team members, and finally prepared a ranked list of Biscayne Bay projects.

III. Progress of Year 2001 Contracts and Projects

"Year one" Biscayne Bay projects for Fiscal Year 2001 were funded in the amount of \$6 million, of which \$3.5 million is for land acquisition, and \$2.5 million is for specific projects consistent with BBPI recommendations. The appropriation was provided to the SFWMD for administration and procurement of funds. Since the BBRRCT did not exist at the time of appropriations or at the end of Fiscal Year 2001, SFWMD staff and BBPI participants prepared a list of projects to be funded by the appropriation that was consistent with the BBPI recommendations. A procurement strategy was approved by the SFWMD Governing Board at their October 2001 meeting.

Twelve projects are in the process of scope of work development, solicitation or contract execution (Table 1). Matching funds in the amount of \$3.7 million have already been identified. The SFWMD is well on the way to encumbering all funds, and have several projects already underway. Since the inception of the Coordination Team, SFWMD staff has submitted various scopes of work for review to the Coordination Team and will do so for future projects as well.

IV. Project Summary and Ranked List

A. Overview of Project Evaluation

Due to the short period of time between the inception of the Coordination Team (October 2001) and the date a ranked project list was needed (January 2002), a formal solicitation and evaluation process of projects could not be developed this year. Therefore, the team agreed to use group consensus measures this year to derive a project list.

Any and all were invited to submit a brief proposal to the Coordination Team for consideration. Several entities submitted project proposals. The applicants were not limited to governmental organizations or to Coordination Team members. Since the Coordination Team consists of several non-governmental entity members, applications were also accepted from them. In addition, several non-member entities indicated an interest in the public outreach and education portion of the program. Their proposals were also included in the evaluation process.

The projects were divided into eight overarching themes, which were derived from the Biscayne Bay Partnership Initiative (not in any particular order):

1. Habitat Restoration
2. Access
3. Watershed management
4. Land Acquisition
5. Environmental Education and Awareness
6. Science
7. Project Support
8. Other major projects effecting Biscayne Bay

The Coordination Team reviewed informal criteria that included whether the project was a continuation of a prior year and whether the project was mandated by law. This year, the Team did not require that applicants provide a cost match for the projects, although it was to be informally considered in the individual member's overall evaluation of the project list. A cost-share could include a cash match, in-kind services, or combination. The applicants were also directed to make a good faith effort to complete projects within one year of the project award, which is consistent with State policy for similar projects.

B. Selected Projects:

Thirty-four projects were presented to the BBRRCT for consideration in Fiscal Year 2002. After careful consideration, the team grouped all public education and outreach proposals together. It was decided to further evaluate these projects after appropriations were made, and insure that all Coordination Team members agree with the proposals and that the information obtained is useful in meeting the goals outlined in the Biscayne Bay Partnership Initiative. Land Acquisition funds of 50 percent, not to exceed \$8 million, were included. Several of the other projects were grouped together, since it was determined that different entities had submitted proposals for the same project. A final list of fifteen projects was created, totaling \$14.203 million.

Once projects were submitted, the Team members independently ranked the projects. Evaluation sheets were turned in ahead of time, all scores were calculated, and a semi-final rank list was created. A Team meeting was held to discuss each project and the projects were then given a final ranking. Projects are recommended for funding (**Table 2**) in order of ranking. However, the team will revisit the list after appropriations are designated, in order to finalize the specific funding recommendations. In cases where partial funding is available for lower ranked projects, the project will be reviewed to determine if its goals can be accomplished with a lesser amount of funding.

The Miami River Dredging Project was recommended for separate funding. This project has received funding from separate appropriations in the past, and is strong enough to stand on its own. This project is fully supported by the team.

V. Recommendations and Conclusions

A. Recommendations:

During the upcoming year, it is recommended that the Biscayne Bay Regional Restoration Coordination Team ("BBRRCT" or "Coordination Team") focus its efforts on the goals and objectives as outlined in the Coordination Team charter and the Biscayne Bay Partnership Initiative (BBPI). These and other issues pertinent to Biscayne Bay ecosystem restoration, enhancement, and preservation must be developed and addressed, while maximizing the effective use of the scarce public dollars available to this program.. Specific items that will be addressed during 2002 include:

1. further development and implementation of the Coordination Team charter goals;
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B. Conclusions:

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Table 1 - South Florida Water Management District								
Coastal Ecosystems Division								
Biscayne Bay Specific Appropriation								
FY 02								
Contract Number	Project Name	Appropriation Amount	Matching Funds	Contract Manager	Contract Administrator	Procurement Type (Oct. 2001 GB approval)	Tentative Governing Board Date	Status / General Information
C-13400	S. Biscayne Bay paleoecological historical salinity benchmark study	\$250,000	\$101,038	Rick Alleman	Jim Robinson	Cooperative agreement with Federal entity	Feb. 2002	SOW under development
C-13401	Biological Performance Measures and Targets in Western Nearshore South Biscayne Bay	\$200,000		Rick Alleman	Jim Robinson	Cooperative agreement with Federal entity	Feb. 2002	SOW being drafted
C-13408	L-31 E culvert and weir construction	\$200,000	n/a	Rick Alleman	Jim Robinson	Request for Bids	July/Aug. 2002	
C-13409	L-31 E culvert / creek performance monitoring and topographic survey	\$70,000	n/a	Rick Alleman	Jim Robinson	Request for Proposal	July/Aug. 2002	
C-13402	Hydraulics of Coastal Spillways (B.Bay)	\$180,000	n/a	Matt Davis	Jim Robinson			To be completed through the SFWMD Hydraulics Department existing contract with USGS. Need to get "early work authorization letter" from the ACOE.
C-13935	Arch Creek south basin stormwater retrofit	\$250,000	\$3,090,000	Rick Alleman	Jim Robinson	Cooperative agreement with Local Government (City of North Miami)	Jan. 2002	Pending comments of SOW from City
C-10245-A2	Biscayne Bay Water quality monitoring	\$200,000	\$200,000	Cecelia Weaver		Existing cooperative agreement with Local Government (DERM)		This money will be encumbered through an existing contract (C-10245) with Dade County DERM.

C-13403	C-102 / C-103 wetland restoration	\$350,000	\$287,700	Matt Davis	Jim Robinson	Cooperative agreement with Federal entity (ACOE)	Mar-02	The ACOE gets their money for this project in January 2002. At that time, contract manager will move forward with SOW.
C-13404	Biscayne Bay Access Strategic Plan	\$300,000	\$25,000	Trisha Stone	Jim Robinson	Cooperative agreement with Non-Profit	Nov. 2001	Approved at GB in November 2001 contingent upon receiving funds from FDEP.
C-13405	Biscayne Bay Website	\$50,000	\$22,898	Trisha Stone	Jim Robinson	Cooperative agreement with University (FAU/FIU Joint Center for Urban and Environmental Problems)		Will seek December 2001 approval through EXO to begin work January 15, 2002
C-13406	Biscayne Bay Environmental Education	\$250,000	n/a	Trisha Stone	Jim Robinson	Request for Proposal	Feb. 2002	SOW under development
C-13407	Biscayne Bay signage / channel markers	\$50,000	n/a	Matt Davis	Jim Robinson	Cooperative agreement with State agency		Will seek January 2002 approval through EXO.
	Biscayne Bay Leased Staff Environmental Scientist	\$50,000	n/a	Deb Drum	n/a	SFWMD Recruitment	n/a	
	Biscayne Bay Management Team Assistance (full-time coordinator)	\$100,000	n/a	Rhonda Haag	n/a	MOU with Federal entity (Task Force) for their recruitment	n/a	
	Total	\$2,500,000	\$3,726,636					

Biscayne Bay Project Rankings for FY 2002-2003				
Rank:	Projects:	Amount	Theme:	Notes:
1	Water Quality Monitoring and Report on Status and Trends	\$250,000	6	\$200,000 anticipated match; continuation*
2	Biscayne Bay Performance Measure Development	\$290,000	6	\$100,000 anticipated match; continuation*
3	Land Acquisition	\$8,000,000	4	(up to 50% total appropriation); continuation*
4	Biscayne Bay Water Quality Model	\$250,000	6	\$250,000 match
5	Development of Technical Criteria for Minimum Flows and Level, Reservations, or Restoration of Freshwater Flows to Biscayne Bay	\$450,000	3	\$450,000 anticipated match
6	South Dade Watershed Plan	\$1,525,000	3	\$650,000 match
7	Salinity and Ecological Effects	\$234,000	6	\$86,000; continuation*
8	Miami-Dade County's Watershed Planning Project, North Central Basins Stormwater Planning Component, Phase I (C-4 Basin)	\$750,000	3	\$750,000
9	Habitat Restoration Project	\$1,000,000	1	up to \$1 million dollars
10	Biscayne Bay Environmental Education and Outreach	\$365,000	5	follow up*
11	Economic Survey of Biscayne Bay	\$400,000	6	\$120,000 match
12	Detection, Mapping, and Characterization of Groundwater Discharges to Biscayne Bay	\$164,000	6	\$50,000 anticipated match
13	Team Coordination	\$100,000	7	up to \$100,000; continuation*
14	Biscayne Bay Strategic Access Plan / Pilot Project Implementation	\$350,000	2	matches anticipated; follow-up*
15	Biscayne Bay Website	\$75,000	7,5	\$10,000 anticipated in kind service match; continuation*
		\$14,203,000		

	<u>Recommended for Separate Funding</u>			
	Miami River Dredging Project	\$1,500,000	8	
*Continuation = continuation of a funded project from year 2001; Follow-up = a project involving implementation of recommendations from a year 2001 project.				
Biscayne Bay Partnership Initiative Overarching Themes				
1 = Habitat Restoration 5 = Environmental Education and Awareness 2 = Access 6 = Science 3 = Watershed Management 7 = Project Support 4 = Land Acquisition 8 = Other Major Projects Affecting Biscayne Bay supported by BBRRCT				